

## **Appendix E**

### **Preparation for Interview and Sample Confirmation Letter**



## Preparation for Interviews

Persons with whom interviews are requested should be given basic information about the purpose of the review, the reason they are being asked to participate, and the expected content of the interview. The following information may be useful to State and local agency staff who are arranging the interviews.

**Purpose of the review.** The review of child and family services programs in all States is a responsibility of the Federal government. All State programs are reviewed periodically for an assessment of how well they are functioning in relation to the needs of the families and children they serve. The reviews are intended to cover the range of services provided by the State or local agency, including family preservation, child protective services, foster care, and adoption. The reviews will identify the areas of the programs that are functioning particularly well, as well as those in need of improvement. The Federal government will work with States to improve areas of need as identified in the reviews.

**Reason for conducting interviews.** In order to determine how well the State or local agency is functioning, interviews are being scheduled with the people who know the systems best, that is, the families and children who receive or have received services from the agency, the service providers and community representatives who work with the agency in delivering services, employees of the agency, and representatives of other agencies and professions with close ties to the child and family services programs.

**Content of the interviews.** One or two members of the team of Federal and State reviewers in local sites will conduct the interview. Families and children who have received services from the agency will be asked whether the services they received have helped them with their needs, whether they have been able to reach their goals, how they have participated in case planning activities, and other general matters relating to their safety, permanency, and well-being. Service providers and other State representatives will be asked questions regarding their involvement in the agency's programs, systemic issues that affect service delivery or outcomes, and whether services and agency programs are achieving their objectives. Information from the interviews will be used collectively to report the findings, and comments will not be attributed to specific individuals. The participation of all persons in the interviews is entirely voluntary. Persons asked to participate in interviews, particularly families and children receiving services, should understand that there will be no adverse consequences if they choose not to participate.

The confirmation letter on the following page may be used to confirm scheduled interviews and help prepare the persons with whom interviews are scheduled.

## **Sample Interview Confirmation Letter**

**Instructions:** Print this letter on agency letterhead and send to persons with scheduled interviews at least 2 weeks prior to the onsite review. The letter should be signed by the State or local coordinator or the coordinator's designee. Reasonable revisions to the letter may be made, in keeping with the basic content and purpose of the letter and review.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the review of the family and children's services program in (State) \_\_\_\_\_. Your interview is scheduled for (time) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ at (location) \_\_\_\_\_. If this appointment is unsatisfactory or you find that you will be unable to be interviewed at this time, please notify me as soon as possible at (phone number) \_\_\_\_\_.

To confirm the purpose of the interview, the Federal and State governments are jointly reviewing the child and family services programs in our State. In accordance with Federal law and regulation, similar reviews are conducted in all States periodically as a means of identifying the strengths of State programs and areas where improvements are needed. The review will focus on program areas that include child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, and family support.

As part of the review, members of the Federal-State review team will conduct interviews with individuals and families who are receiving or have received services from this agency, with service providers, and with various professional and community representatives who share an interest in the public family and children's services programs in our State. The interviews should not last more than 1 hour and will focus on the quality of services provided, the outcomes of services, and the needs of the families served by the programs.

Information obtained from the interviews will be used in preparing a report on the status of the State's programs. The comments of individuals interviewed will not be identified by name, but will be used in summary form to describe the findings of the review. Your participation in the review is entirely voluntary. Individuals who choose not to be interviewed will not suffer any adverse effects to the services they now receive or may receive in the future due to the refusal to be interviewed.

Thank you again for your assistance in this important review.